

AC 4638(3) CALLINGTON

Callington Urban District Council

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

Medical Officer of Health, for 1920.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you my 21st Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary conditions of the Urban District of Callington during the year 1920.

Natural and Social Conditions of the District.

Callington stands on a gentle declivity in undulating country in the centre of East Cornwall; towards the South and West the country declines to the valleys of the Tamar and Lynher, and on the North about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the town is Kitt Hill, the highest point of Hingston Down, 1067 feet above sea level. The area of the district is 2,492 acres. The population in 1901 was 1,714; in 1911, 1713; and the present population is probably about the same. The Assessable value is £5,177. The number of persons in receipt of Poor-law relief is 22, and the amount paid £270.

The soil is loamy; sub-soil clay and clay-slate. At one time Mining was an important industry, but now Agriculture and Commerce are the chief occupation of the inhabitants. A disturbing element just now is unemployment affecting 32 men, of whom 20 are married; nearly all are labourers and more than half lost their employment through the closing of mines. As a Health Resort Callington with its bracing moorland air has become attractive, especially in summer, for those who seek health and sunshine; quietude exists in the pretty valleys and Kitt Hill affords fine views as extensive and varied as they are beautiful. Early in June an event of more than usual interest was the visit of the Royal Cornwall Agricultural Society. Two perfect summer days helped to make the Show a brilliant success, and it is gratifying to note that not a single accident happened even of a trivial nature; not in the Show yard alone, but the streets and roads congested with all kinds of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, might easily have produced many casualties under less capable management than that of a most efficient police service.

Vital Statistics.

The number of births registered in the district was 38, viz., 26 males and 12 females, a birth rate of 24.1 per 1,000 on an estimated population of 1,576. The number of deaths registered was 16, viz., 7 males and 9 females, a death-rate of 10.1. Of these one was a non-resident; 3 deaths of residents also occurred away from home; this would give a corrected death rate of 11.4. Thirty-eight births and 18 deaths give a natural increase of 20.

The causes of death were as follows:—

Measles	...	...	1
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	2
Tubercular Meningitis	...	...	1
Cancer	...	...	1
Heart Disease	...	...	1
Respiratory Diseases	...	...	2
Congenital Debility	...	...	1
Inquests	...	...	3
All other causes	...	...	6

The ages at death were:—

Under 1 year	...	...	2
15 and under 25	...	...	2
25 „ „ 45	...	...	2
45 „ „ 65	...	...	5
65 and upwards	...	...	7

Of the deaths over 65 all occurred between 70 and 80.

Infantile Mortality.

Of the two deaths that occurred under 1 year, one was due to congenital debility and the other broncho-pneumonia following measles, this gives an infantile mortality per 1,000 births of 52.

Zymotic Death-rate.

One death occurred from zymotic disease, namely the case from measles referred to under the infant mortality.

Infectious Diseases.

There were a few cases of measles in March and April; influenza was prevalent in May and June; there was nothing further in epidemic form. **The following cases were notified.**

Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	3
Diphtheria	...	...	3
Malaria	...	...	1
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	2
Tubercular Meningitis	...	...	1

The 3 cases of ophthalmia neonatorum occurred at different periods of the year and were in no way connected. The first patient died from congenital debility. The other 2 recovered with no impairment of vision although both eyes were affected. Three cases of diphtheria appeared simultaneously in May; the origin was difficult to



trace, but the most probable cause was importation ; all terminated in recovery. Bacteriological examination is made in suspected cases. The houses of patients are visited and inspected and advice given as to precautions necessary. Fumigation of rooms is carried out by the Sanitary Authority and disinfectants supplied. There is no Isolation Hospital at present, but it is probable that one will be built jointly with Liskeard Borough and Looe ; many meetings have been held for this purpose.

Sewerage and Drainage.

With the exception of a short length of sewer in Haye Road becoming blocked, the sewerage system is in good working order and frequent inspections are made ; it is not anticipated that any new sewer will be required during the coming year. Twelve drains have been blocked from various causes ; all were cleared. Two new drains have been laid. Three new buildings have had their drainage systems inspected, smoke-tested and found satisfactory. Two new w.c.'s have been built and six re-constructed ; on the whole the district is well supplied with w.c.'s and the standard is being continually raised. Six gullies have been repaired.

Water Supply.

There has been no change in the Water Supply during the year ; much of the water is derived from the public stream at pipe-well, some from private pumps, but most from the Water Works Co., having a storage of 130,000 gallons and giving a constant supply except during droughts, when it is intermittent. The year was unusually wet, particularly the first five months, so that the quantity was sufficient and the quality has been satisfactory. My last report contained an account of the severe drought with its consequent privation and inconveniences, especially with regard to Sanitary matters ; the question naturally occurred — Had the town adequate supply of water to meet reasonable demands ? The reply was in the negative. Joint meetings of the Council and Water Company took place resulting in the latter promising a larger supply ; this would necessitate considerable capital outlay and on subsequently reckoning the cost of material, etc., the Company considered the undertaking beyond its financial resources and had to be abandoned ; the intention to accomplish it however remains when circumstances and conditions are more favourable. In the meantime the Council are active in their efforts to secure a better supply and I think that between the two a satisfactory result is most probable.

Trade Premises.

There are 40 workshops and workplaces, of which 3 are slaughter houses and 7 dairies, registered and kept in a satisfactory condition, and there are 4 bakehouses. Few nuisances have been found and these have been abated. The need for lime-washing occasionally occurs ; 3 formal notices have been served and complied with.

Housing of the Working Classes.

One New House has been built; 2 Army Huts erected and adapted for habitation in conjunction with existing houses; in all 3 there is a good water supply, and the sanitary conditions are satisfactory; the drains well laid, trapped and ventilated, and smoke-tested where necessary. It has been estimated that 30 new houses are required for the district, and we have now reached this stage that 4 acres of land have been approved and acquired on the Liskeard Road, and plans for both the site and the houses prepared and approved. It is proposed to start by erecting 14 houses, 8 parlour and 6 non-parlour types, and tenders are now being submitted for preparation of the site. With the erection of these new houses there can be no longer any reasonable excuse for not closing some of the worst dwellings long since considered unfit for human habitation; these serve no useful purpose, but are dangerous to health and too often act as an inducement to persons in poor circumstances to come into the district to reside.

Tabular Statement.

Dwelling houses inspected	...	...	...	150
Action taken with regard to houses unfit for habitation				4
Choked drains	...	...	...	12
Offensive accumulations	...	...	...	20
Overcrowding	...	...	...	2
General repairs	...	...	...	many

Scavenging and House Refuse.

The Local Authority is responsible for the removal of refuse, and the work is done by contract in a fairly satisfactory manner, ashbins being cleared once a week, and other refuse removed once a month. This method is good but some laxity is too often noticed in the work. The matter has recently been under consideration and will probably result in the Council employing their own horse and cart and men for the purpose.

The scavengers' wheelbarrow has been replaced by a modern iron hand-cart, an improvement both in appearance and usefulness.

Bye-Laws.

Those in force in the district are with regard to nuisances, new buildings, slaughter-houses and dairies and cowsheds. The Infectious Disease (Notification Act, 1889) and part III Public Health (Amendment) Act, 1890, have been adopted.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

H. DAVIS,
M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

Callington, March 31st, 1921.

